

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 080365

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DRAFTED BY NEA: ARDAY:CFE

APPROVED BY THE SECRETARY

NEA: MR. ATHERTON

S/S:O:DLMACK

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 080365

NODIS

FOR THE AMBASSADOR FROM THE SECRETARY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SY, LE, US

SUBJECT: MESSAGE FOR ASAD

1. PLEASE CONVEY FOLLOWING TO PRESIDENT ASAD FROM THE SECRETARY.
2. AMBASSADOR MURPHY HAS REPORTED ON HIS DISCUSSION WITH PRESIDENT ASAD APRIL 1. THE SECRETARY WAS VERY APPRECIATIVE OF THE THOROUGH AND USEFUL ANALYSIS OF THE LEBANESE SITUATION PROVIDED BY PRESIDENT ASAD. HIS STATEMENT OF SYRIA'S AIMS AND CONCERNS IN LEBANON WAS AN EXTRAORDINARILY LUCID PRESENTATION THAT WILL BE OF GREAT ASSISTANCE TO US IN EVALUATING THE SITUATION THERE AS IT DEVELOPS IN THE DAYS AND WEEKS AHEAD.
3. THE SECRETARY WANTS PRESIDENT ASAD TO KNOW THAT WE UNDERSTAND THE PROBLEM THAT HE SEES IN LEBANON ARISING FROM THE LACK OF A CENTRAL FORCE AT THE DISPOSAL OF ANY NEW PRESIDENT WE HAVE, HOWEVER, BEEN IMPRESSED WITH THE MANNER IN WHICH THE SYRIANS WORKED OUT THE CEASEFIRE WITHOUT THE INTRODUCTION OF

SECRET

PAGE 02 STATE 080365

MILITARY FORCE. IN PUBLIC TESTIMONY THIS MORNING BEFORE

SFRC, THE SECRETARY MADE A POINT OF EMPHASIZING THE HIGHLY RESPONSIBLE AND CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE SYRIA HAS BEEN PLAYING. WE ARE HOPEFUL THAT POLITICAL MEANS WILL CONTINUE TO PROVE SUFFICIENT. OUR VIEWS ABOUT THE DANGER OF INTERVENTION HAVE NOT CHANGED. WITH THE ARRIVAL OF AMBASSADOR BROWN

IN BEIRUT, WE ANTICIPATE BEING IN A POSITION TO PROVIDE MORE EFFECTIVE ASSISTANCE TO THE SYRIAN POLITICAL EFFORT, AND WE WILL DO EVERYTHING WE CAN TO HELP.

4. WE HAVE RECEIVED AMBASSADOR BROWN'S FIRST REPORTS FROM BEIRUT, AND THE SECRETARY WANTS TO MAKE AVAILABLE TO PRESIDENT ASAD BROWN'S IMPRESSIONS AFTER HIS INITIAL CONVERSATIONS. HIS FIRST TALKS HAVE BEEN WITH CHRISTIAN LEADERS, WITH KARAME AND WITH OTHER POLITICAL AND MILITARY FIGURES. HE HAS SO FAR SENT US DETAILS ONLY ON THE TALK WITH THE CHRISTIAN LEADERS. HE HAD A LONG SESSION APRIL 1ST WITH PRESIDENT FRANGIE AND WITH CHAMOUN AND GEMAYEL. THE CHRISTIANS OBVIOUSLY FELT UNDER CONSIDERABLE PRESSURE FROM JUMBLATT, AND FRANGIE WAS PARTICULARLY CONCERNED ABOUT WHAT HE DESCRIBED AS CONSTANT NEW DEMANDS. THE THREE LEADERS STATED THAT THE OFFENSIVE AGAINST THE PRESIDENT HAD BEEN DIRECTED AGAINST THE INSTITUTION OF THE PRESIDENCY, WHICH THE LEFTISTS WISHED TO DEMOLISH ALONG WITH OTHER ASPECTS AND INSTITUTIONS OF LEBANESE LIFE. FRANGIE SAID, IN A PRIVATE CONVERSATION WITH BROWN, THAT IF THE CEASEFIRE COULD BE MADE TO STICK HE SAW NO PROBLEM IN AMENDING ARTICLE 73 OF THE CONSTITUTION AND ELECTION OF A NEW PRESIDENT. AFTER THIS, FRANGIE SAID, THE REMAINDER OF HIS PERIOD OF OFFICE WOULD BE TOO SHORT TO BE WORTHWHILE AND HE WOULD TAKE A QUOTE BADLY NEEDED REST UNQUOTE. FRANGIE ALSO MENTIONED DURING THE COURSE OF THE CONVERSATION THAT PALESTINIAN WILLINGNESS TO ABIDE BY THE CAIRO ACCORDS WAS AN ABSOLUTE CONDITION OF ANY PERMANENT CEASEFIRE.

5. BROWN RECEIVED DIFFERING ESTIMATES OF CHRISTIAN MILITARY STRENGTH AND STAYING POWER. HE TALKED TO A NUMBER OF SENIOR CHRISTIAN OFFICERS WHO SHOWED NO ALARM OVER THE MILITARY SITUATION BEYOND MENTION THAT THE

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 STATE 080365

CHRISTIAN SIDE HAD TO USE ITS AMMUNITION SUPPLIES MORE SPARINGLY THAN THE LEFTIST COALITION, WHICH SEEMED TO HAVE UNLIMITED SUPPLIES.

6. BROWN HAS AN APPOINTMENT TO SEE JUMBLATT TODAY. HE HAD HAD ONE SCHEDULED FOR YESTERDAY, BUT JUMBLATT POSTPONED IT.

7. THE SECRETARY SENDS HIS WARMEST REGARDS TO PRESIDENT ASAD. HE BELIEVES IT IS OF THE GREATEST IMPORTANCE THAT WE KEEP CLOSELY IN TOUCH WITH THE SYRIAN GOVERNMENT DURING THE NEXT CRITICAL PERIOD AND THAT OUR EFFORTS IN LEBANON, DIRECTED AS THEY ARE AT THE SAME GOALS, BE CLOSELY COORDINATED. KISSINGER

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